

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 874

By Stewart

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Dr. Joel Cunningham upon his accomplishments while serving as vice chancellor and president of the University of the South.

WHEREAS, this General Assembly takes pride in honoring those esteemed individuals who have dedicated their professional careers and personal excellence to improving the quality of life for their fellow Tennesseans; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Joel Cunningham, one such noteworthy individual, will soon be taking a much deserved retirement after serving ten years with the greatest integrity and character as vice chancellor and president of the University of the South in Sewanee; and

WHEREAS, after graduating summa cum laude from the University of Chattanooga, now the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (UTC) in 1965 with majors in both mathematics and psychology, he completed his master's and doctoral degrees in mathematics at the University of Oregon; and

WHEREAS, beginning his academic career as a member of the faculty of the University of Kentucky, he taught mathematics for five years until he accepted an appointment as dean of continuing education and professor of mathematics at UTC in 1974; while teaching at UTC, he also served a one year fellowship with the American Council on Education; and

WHEREAS, in 1979, he left his alma mater, accepted a position as a member of the faculty, and, thereafter, served as vice-president for academic affairs, dean of the faculty, and professor of mathematics at Susquehanna University in Pennsylvania; and

WHEREAS, in 1984, he was named president of Susquehanna University, serving with the utmost integrity and probity for sixteen years, earning the respect and admiration of the

students, administration, board, staff, and faculty alike for the exceptional quality of his work;
and

WHEREAS, in 2000, he was selected to lead the University of the South as the fifteenth vice chancellor and president of Sewanee; and

WHEREAS, since assuming office as vice chancellor and president of the University of the South, Dr. Joel Cunningham has served with honor and distinction while leading an administration focused on a multi-faceted strategic planning effort characterized by fiscal discipline and touching virtually every area of the University's operation; and

WHEREAS, during his illustrious tenure, the University of the South has enjoyed record applications to the undergraduate College of Arts and Sciences, growth in the influence and reach of the graduate School of Theology, and increasing recognition as a leading national liberal arts university; and

WHEREAS, under his exemplary leadership and guidance, the University's fundraising campaign, The Sewanee Call, came to a record-breaking conclusion in June of 2008, with over \$205.7 million in gifts and commitments, exceeding the original \$180 million goal; and

WHEREAS, the campaign was marked by over \$40 million in endowment commitments for scholarships; extensive academic, residential, and athletic facility construction; the addition of 3,000 acres to the University's landholdings; and significant support for faculty compensation and academic enrichment; and

WHEREAS, supporting intense intellectual engagement among students and faculty, Dr. Cunningham helped develop and establish several new academic programs and institutes, including the Sewanee Environmental Institute, the Carey Center for Pre-business, the Babson Center for Global Commerce, and he added a pre-business minor to the curriculum; and

WHEREAS, fostering an environment of academic excellence during his illustrious tenure, Sewanee students have boasted numerous Watson Fellowships, Goldwater Scholars, NCAA post-graduate Fellows, Fulbright Scholars, and two Rhodes Scholars during the last decade; and

WHEREAS, throughout his distinguished career with the University of the South, Dr. Cunningham has been an active proponent on behalf of the University on a national level;

espousing the University's virtues, tradition, and excellence, Sewanee is recognized as one of the top liberal arts institutions in the nation; and

WHEREAS, evincing the greatest integrity in all his chosen endeavors, he has offered his singular skills and leadership to numerous noteworthy academic committees, boards, and organizations, including service as chair of the Commission on Policy Analysis of the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, chair of the Association for Appalachian Colleges, chair of the Tennessee Independent Colleges and Universities Association, and president of the Society for Values in Higher Education: and

WHEREAS, highly sought after for his vast knowledge and invaluable expertise, he is also a founding member of the National Campus Compact and the Pennsylvania Campus Compact organizations for student public service, and he serves as a trustee of the Colleges and Universities of the Anglican Union, and as a trustee of the Association of Episcopal Colleges; and

WHEREAS, all of his many esteemed accomplishments aside, Dr. Joel Cunningham is most appreciative of the love and support of his wife, Trudy; his children, Nancy Cunningham and husband, Eric Wright, and Susan Cunningham and husband, Philip Eliot; and his grandchildren, Adam Wright, Ellen Wright, and Anna Eliot; and

WHEREAS, leaving his indelible mark on the rich tradition of the University of the South, Dr. Cunningham expertly and admirably guided Sewanee to a new level of excellence in academics, research, fundraising, and athletics during the last ten years, leaving it in a prime position for much continued success in the years to come; now, therefore;

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we hereby honor and commend Dr. Joel Cunningham for his stalwart service and dedication as vice chancellor and president of the University of the South, thank him for his peerless public service to the citizens and students of Tennessee, and wish him much continued success in all his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.